



Florida Department of Health

TATTOO TIPS

Use a licensed tattoo artist at a licensed facility.

What are some of the risks for getting a tattoo in an unsafe and unlicensed facility—or just in general?

- Allergic reactions and skin infections.
- Contracting infectious diseases, such as HIV and AIDS, hepatitis B and C, tetanus, herpes simplex virus, staph and MRSA from unsanitary equipment.
- A new tattoo exposed to dirty surfaces may become infected.
- Unknown long-term health effects from inks, dyes or pigments which contain metal salts.

What should I look for in a tattoo establishment to ensure I'm in a trustworthy environment?

- A clean shop is a good sign that the tattoo artist or body piercer follows good infection-control practices.
- There should be licenses on the wall in plain sight for the establishment and each tattoo artist. If you do not see any licenses, ask to see them. Never get a procedure if they cannot be provided.
- Make sure that every needle or other device that will penetrate the skin is unused and taken out of a sterile, individually-wrapped package.
- Make sure the tattoo ink is single-use and not re-used on customers.
- Make sure the tattoo artist wears gloves and changes them if they touch surfaces outside of the tattoo area that are not covered with barriers or if there are glove tears.

■ During the tattoo procedure, the tattoo artist should wash their hands frequently, including every time they leave and re-enter the room.

■ No eating or drinking should be allowed for any person in the room except for the purposes of first aid.

■ Your tattoo artist should explain how you should care for your tattoo once it has been completed. Be sure to follow their instructions as most infections occur when the customer does not.

■ If the tattoo artist is ill, do not get the procedure.

What can I do to protect myself from an unlicensed tattoo artist or establishment?

- Talk to your tattoo artist before getting a tattoo to make sure their establishment is trustworthy and so you know what to expect. Ask questions about their procedure and the equipment they use. A good artist will show pride in his profession and take the time to explain his tattoo and sterilization procedures.
- Ask questions during your appointment and observe your surroundings.
- Provide full disclosure of any illness or medical conditions you have, as well as any medications you are currently taking.
- Follow the aftercare instructions. Keep your tattoo clean at all times.

